

I. *Remarks upon an antient Roman Inscription, found in that part of Italy, which formerly belonged to the Sabines ; and now in the possession of Richard Rawlinson, LL. D. & F. R. S. By Mr. John Ward, Prof. Rhetor. Gresh. & F. R. S.*

Read Jan. 11. 1749-50. **T**HIS inscription is cut in a small brass plate, which together with a draught of the same dimensions accompany this paper. See TAB. I. *Fig. 1.* The words of the inscription, as they stand on the plate, with some account how and where it was found, were formerly publish'd by *Fabretti*^a. But as what he says is very short, I shall take leave to transcribe the whole of it, which is as follows.

FLORAE
TI PLAVTIVS DROSVS
MAG II
V. S. L. M.

Minucius Felix^b, *Lactantiusque*^c, *Floram inter propudiosa gentilitatis numina collocant. Vindicat autem hanc infamiam Ouzelius ad Minucium, pag. 233, ubi ex Varrone et Ennio probat Romulo anti-*

^a *Inscript. Antiq. Cap. x. pag. 742.*

^b *Pag. 28. edit. Ouzel. quarto.*

^c *Instit. Lib. I. cap. 20.*

P p

quiores

quiores fuisse Florae cultum, et flamines ei datos. Vestigium igitur hic remanet in Sabinis primum Floram coli coeptam; cum e Sabino agro in lamella aenea inscriptio haec nuper eruta fuerit apud Licentiam, Ursinorum oppidum, quod Digentia rivo alluitur. Licentia quippe a Digentia detortum nomen facile quis credet.

The plate now before us, and the inscription upon it, so exactly agree with this account of *Fabretti*, as to leave no doubt of their being the same with those described by him. The present possessor of the plate purchased it at Rome, in January 1720. N. S. At which time a small brass label was fixed to it, containing the following words cut in capital letters, EX REGIIS CHRISTINÆ THESAURIS; which is also here exhibited, with a draught of the same form and size subjoined to that of the inscription. It is probable therefore, that this plate might have been deposited among the other curiosities of that princess, soon after it was dug up; and afterwards have fallen into other hands, who affixed that label to it; till at length being exposed to sale, it was bought by the Doctor at the time above mentioned. For Queen *Christina* died at Rome, April the 19, 1689, where she had resided from the year 1658, after her return thither from France^d. The year following a catalogue of her Greek and Latin medals was printed at Rome^e, and *Fabretti* pu-

^d *Moreri, Diction. Histor.*

^e *Nummi antiqui in thesauro Christinae reginae Suecorum, Romae asseruati, a Francisco Camelo, ejusdem Majestatis antiquario. Romae 1690.*

blished his large and elaborate collection of *Antient inscriptions* there in 1702. In which he says, that this plate, at the time he wrote his account of it, *nuper eruta fuerit*. But as he wrote this very probably some years before the publication of his book, the plate might have been found before the death of that princess, and been in her possession; and after her decease come into such hands, as might occasion the disposal of it, at the time, and in the manner, here recited.

But I shall now proceed to consider the words of the inscription; which may, I presume, be read at length, with the proper supplements, in the following manner:

*Florae Tiberius Plautius Drosus, pagi magister
anni secundi, votum solvit libens merito.*

The goddess FLORA was thought by the *Romans* to preside over fields and trees, and therefore they addressed to her to favour them with prosperous and fruitful seasons. Hence *Varro* says: *Invoco Rubigum et Floram, quibus propitiis, neque rubigo frumenta atque arbores corrumpit, neque non tempestive florent. Itaque publicae Robigo feriae Robigalia, Florae ludi Floralia sunt instituti*^f. But it appears from other passages of that writer referred to by *Fabretti*, that she was first a Sabine deity, and introduced at Rome by king *Tatius* in the time of *Romulus*, many ages before the institution of the

^f De R. R. Lib. i. cap. 1.

Floralia. For that festival was not observed till the year of the city 513, when the expense of it was ordered to be paid out of the fines levied on those persons, who had converted the public lands to their own use, for feeding their cattle &c. The memory of which is yet preserved on a coin struck that year, having on one side the *Genius of Rome*: and on the other a *sheep*, as an emblem of the manner, by which that money was raised; with the legend M P O B L I C I V S M A L E O L V S, the name of one of the aediles, who had the care of the coinage^h. And the same year also he with his brother *Lucius Publicius*, the other aedile, erected a temple in honour of the goddess *Flora*, near to the great *circus*ⁱ. However the *Floralia* were not afterwards constantly observed, but only when the season was bad, and seemed to threaten a scarcity of provisions. But in the year 580^k, by a decree of the senate, they were ordered to be celebrated annually, upon the fourth of the kalends of May, and the three following days^l, which ended with the first of that month.

TI, the two first letters of the *praenomen* of the person mentioned in the inscription, are the usual abbreviation of *Tiberius*; as a single T is of *Titus*^m.

^g Ovid. *Fast.* Lib. v. v. 279.

^h See *Vaillant Fam. Rom. in Publicia, num. 1.*

ⁱ *Tacit. Annal.* Lib. ii. cap. 49.

^k See *Pigbii Annales ad ann. 513, 580*

^l Ovid. *Fast.* Lib. v. v. 327, 183.

^m *Valer. Prob. de not. Roman.*

PLAVTIVS, which follows, denotes the *family name*, and often occurs in Roman writers, as also upon coins, where it is sometimes written *Plo-tius*, and at other times *Plutius*ⁿ.

DROSVS, the *cognomen*, I do not remember to have seen so spelt elsewhere; but I make no doubt of its being the same as *Drusus*, which we frequently meet with. For thus, as was just now observed, his family name is written three several ways, *Plautius*, *Plotius*, and *Plutius*. And *Suetonius*, speaking of the *Claudian* family, says: *Notissimum est Claudios omnes, excepto P. Clodio, optimates assertoresque dignitatis ac potentiae patriciorum semper fuisse*^o. So likewise *Poblicius*, the name of the aedile above mentioned, is sometimes spelt *Publicius*. These instances indeed all relate to the family name; but the same is true likewise with regard to the *cognomen*. So the name *Poblicola*, first given to *Publius Valerius*, the colleague of *Brutus*, but retained afterwards by the family, is generally written *Publicola* p. And as to *Drusus*, *Suetonius* acquaints us with the original of that name. *Drusus*, says he, *hostium duce Drauso cominus trucidato, sibi posterisque suis cognomen invenit* q. His other names were *Marcus Livius*, and the action here referred to was in the year of the city 470 r.

ⁿ See *Vaillant Fam. Roman. in Plautia*.

^o In *Tiber. cap. 2*.

^p *Liv. ii. 8. vii. 32*.

^q In *Tiber. cap. 3*.

^r See *Pighii annales, ad an. 470, 471*.

It therefore seems very probable, that this *cognomen* being so antient, might by some of the descendents of that family be writen *Drosus*, and afterwards more generally *Drusus*. For as the Romans endeavoured gradually to improve their language, and soften its pronunciation, they changed *au* into *o*, and again *o* into *u*, for the more agreeable sound. This appears not only from the examples given already, but likewise from many others, which might be produced, as well of common words as proper names. Of the former sort are *codex* from *caudex*, *corus* from *caurus*, *lotus* from *lautus*, and *fox* from *saurex*; and of the latter, *mulius* from *moltus*, *rubigo* from *robigo*, *vulgus* from *volgus*, *Vulcanus* from *Volcanus*, and the like.

MAG. II. according to the explication given above, are an abbreviation of the words *magister secundi*, which stand for *pagi magister anni secundi*, was the whole to be expressed at length. The word *pagus* signifies a division or large portion of land, not much unlike what we call a *shire* or *county*. Hence *Caesar* in his history of the *Gallic war* says: *Omnis civitas Helvetia in quatuor pagos divisa est* ^s. And again speaking of the *Suevi*, who were a very large nation: *Hi centum pagos habere dicuntur* ^t; tho' *pagus* is sometimes used by the poets in a more restrained sense, for a single *village*. So *Mandela* is described by *Horace*, as *rugosus frigore pagus* ^v. And *Virgil* represents the rural sports, as

^s Lib. i. cap. 12.

^t Lib. iv. cap. 1.

^v *Epist. Lib. i. xviii. 103.*

performed *pagos et compita circum* *. As to the title *magister*, it always denotes some preheminance and authority, and is used in a variety of senses, as *master* is with us. So *Festus* says: *Magistri non solum doctores artium; sed etiam pagorum, societatum, vicorum, collegiorum, equitum dicuntur; quia omnes hi magis ceteris possunt* †. Of these the *magister pagi* was a very antient officer among the Romans, appointed by *Numa Pompilius*, the immediate successor of *Romulus*, as we learn from *Dionysius of Halicarnassus*. “For *Numa* (as he “ says) first divided the whole country into such “ portions, as they call *παγες*; over each of which “ he appointed an officer, whom he calls *ἄρχοντα*, “ *ἐπίσκοπον*, and *περιπολον*, that is, a president or “ *master*, inspector, and surveyor. His business was “ to survey the lands, and take an account in writing, whether they were well or ill cultivated; “ which accounts he laid before the king: who “ commended those husbandmen, who had been “ diligent, and treated them courteously; but reproved and fined the indolent, in order to excite “ them to greater diligence.” The Roman territories at that time were confined within very narrow bounds; but in after ages, as they enlarged their dominions by conquests, many of the countries, which they subdued, were given to the soldiers, as a reward for their service. And as a certain quantity of land was allotted to each soldier, the distribution was made by persons sent with them for that purpose; and those settlements, or colo-

* *Georg. Lib. ii. 382.*

† *In voc. Magisterare.*

‡ *Auzi, Rom. Lib. ii. cap. 76.*

nies, were divided into several districts, or *pagi*, which were considered as distinct communities. And because differences would sometimes happen among them afterwards about the limits of their possessions, the *magistri pagorum* were impowered to adjust them, and prevent all incroachments of that sort. For which end also public processions were made at certain times, accompanied with sacrifices and other religious ceremonies ^a, in honour of the tutelar deity of the place, the expense of which was born by contributions of the inhabitants; as was shewn in a former paper, which I had the honour to lay before this Society ^b. These officers had likewise the care of the roads, which led from one town or village to another, within their respective jurisdictions, to keep them in good repair ^c. And another part of their duty was to provide accommodations for the armies in their march, as also for the governors of provinces, and other great persons, in passing thro their several districts upon public affairs ^d. Horace seems to refer to this, when he sais :

*Huc venturus erat Maecenas, optimus atque
Cocceius, missi magnis de rebus uterque
Legati; aversos soliti componere amicos.*

And soon after :

*Proxima Campano ponti quæ villula tectum
Praebuit; et parochi, quæ debent, ligna salemque ^e.*

^a *Siculus Flaccus*, pag. 9, 25, edit. Coef.

^b See *Philos. Transact.* num. 486.

^c *Sicul. Flacc.* ubi *supra*. *Fraz. Magon. et Vez.* pag. 255.

^d *Sic. Flac.* pag. 25.

^e *Serm. Lib. i. Eclog. v. v. 27, 45.*

Where by *parochi* (so named from παρέχειν to *provide*) may be meant an inferior sort of *officers*, appointed by the *master* to provide all necessities for strangers, included here in the words *ligna salemque* f.

But as the title *magister* was common to so many officers of different characters, it may be expected, that some reason should be alleged for assigning it to the *magister pagi* in this inscription, where no other word is added to determine the particular sense of it. And indeed I cannot pretend to offer any direct proof for this; but the reasons, which induce me to think so, are these which follow. Both the design and form of the inscription seem to suit him best. For the purport of it being the performance of a vow to the goddess *Flora*, very probably for a prosperous and fruitful season, as the effect of their addresses to her; by whom could that so properly be done, as by this officer, who presided over the religious as well as civil affairs of the inhabitants? Besides, I cannot but think from the name *Drosus*, which elsewhere is always spelt *Drusus*, that this inscription was written before several other officers were appointed, who afterwards bore the title of *magister*; which might render any explanatory word unnecessary at that time, especially in the place where he had his residence. There are indeed two inscriptions published, one by *Gruter* g, and the other by *Rinesius* h,

f See *Budaei Annot. in Pandect.* p. 262.

g *Pag.* xxvi. num. 9.

h *Class. sext. num.* LXXII.

in which the word PAGI is added to MAGISTER; in the same manner as we meet with *magister collegii, vici*, and the like. But the former of these was as late as the reign of *Tiberius*; and the time of the latter uncertain, so that nothing can be concluded from it. And there are likewise several inscriptions, in which MAGISTER and MAGISTRI stand alone, without the addition of any explanatory word. But then it appears either from the design of those inscriptions, the number of persons mentioned, or some other circumstance relating to them, that their office was of a different nature; some few instances of which I shall presently have occasion to mention. From these considerations therefore I have been led to conclude, that the sense here assigned to the word *magister*, as it respects this inscription, is the most probable.

That the characters $\bar{\text{II}}$. stand for *anni secundi*, the date of the time, during which this *Drosus* had then held that office, is confirmed by several inscriptions published by *Gruter*. In one of which we have MAG. ANNI. $\bar{\text{V}}$ ⁱ; in another MAGISTRI. ANNI. $\bar{\text{VI}}$ ^k; and in two others MAG. ANNI. PRIMI ^l, where the word denoting the time is expressed at length. As these different ways therefore of expressing the time relate to persons, who all bore that title, tho not the same office,

ⁱ Pag. LIV. num. 1.

^k Pag. XXXVI. num. 7.

^l Pag. XXXIII. num. 10. XXXV. 5.

as appears by the inscriptions; they plainly shew in what sense those characters are to be taken here.

The concluding letters V. S. L. M. which stand for *votum solvit libens merito*, contain the usual form of dedicating votive monuments.

But the thing dedicated is not mentioned here, which was most probably a statue or an altar; and I rather think the latter, from the number of such inscriptions in *Gruter*, and other collectors of antient monuments, taken from altars. Whereas we hear of few images of any sort relating to this deity. *Pliny* indeed mentions a statue of *Flora* at *Rome*, which was made by *Praxiteles*^m. And *Montfaucon* has given the draughts of three or four others, which have been thought to represent that goddessⁿ. Her head also is found upon two coins, one of the *Claudian*^o, and the other of the *Servilian* family^p. However these are but very few, comparatively with what we meet with of other deities. Besides, the age of this inscription (which seems further confirmed by its brevity and simplicity) as likewise the place where it was discovered, suit much better with an altar; for altars were erected in all parts of the country, and very early. I suppose therefore, that this plate was fixed into the front of some altar consecrated to *Flora*; for which purpose both

^m *Nat. Hist. Lib. xxxvi. cap. v. §. 5.*

ⁿ *L. Antiq. expliq. Tom. i. par. 2. chap. 30.*

^o See *Vaillant Fam. Rom. num. 13.*

^p *Ibid. num. 17.*

the shape of it, and the angles at each end, seem to be very well adapted. The town, where it was dug up, is by *Fabretti* called *Licentia*; which he supposes to have taken its name from the river *Digentia*, that runs by it. *Horace's* farm therefore was probably not very far from thence, since he speaks of it as near that river, when he says:

*Me quotiens reficit gelidus Digentia rivus;
Quem Mandela bibit, rugosus frigore pagus:
Quid sentire putas, quid credis, amice, precari ?*

The antiquity of this inscription, together with its singularity, made me think it not unworthy the notice of this learned Society. For tho we meet with two inscriptions, one in *Gruter*,^r and the other in *Rinesius*^s, to the honour of *Flora* jointly with other deities; yet this is the only one I can find, which is addressed to her alone. And as to the manner of explaining the several parts of it, that is left to every one to judge of, as he pleases.

G. C.

Decemb. 20, 1749.

JOHN WARD.

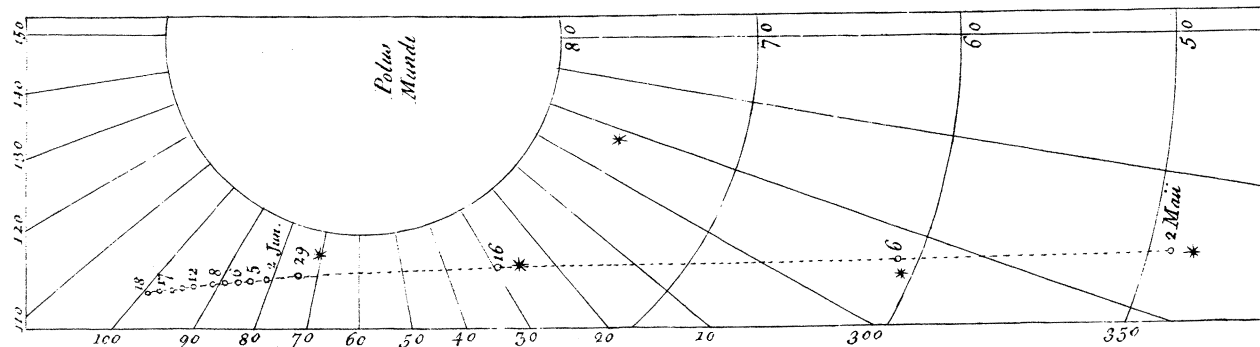
^r *Epist. Lib. i. XVIII. 103.*

^s *Pag. CXXI. num. I.*

^t *Class. prim. num. CCXXXIII.*

FLORAE
II. PLANTIVS. DROSVS
MAG. II
V · S · L · M

EX REGIIS
CHRISTINÆ THESARIS



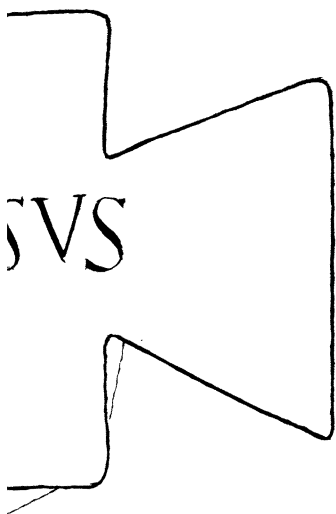


Fig. 3. p. 311.

θ^*
Camelopardali

α^*

β^*

γ^*

δ^*

ϵ^*

ζ^*

\circ *Cometa*

Fig. 2. p. 307.

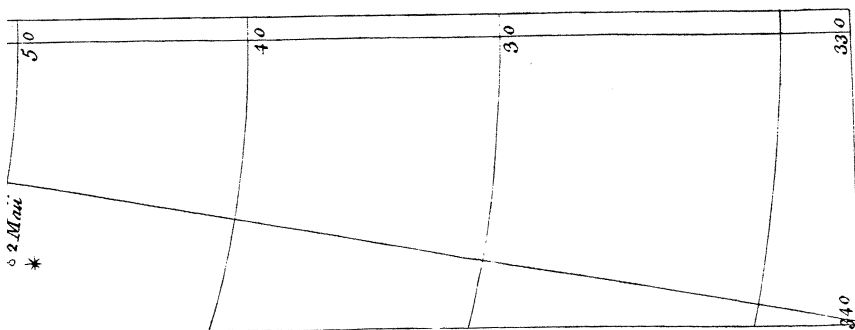


Fig. 1. p. 293.



Fig. 3. p. 311.

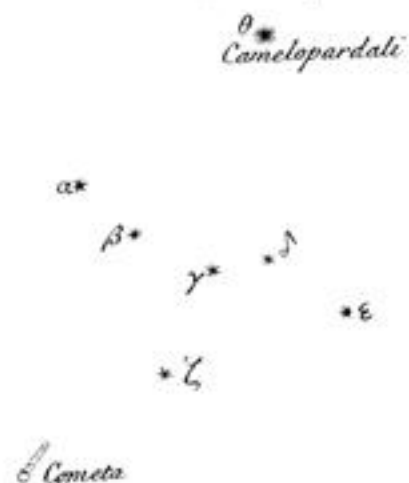


Fig. 2. p. 307.

